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26.—*The Life of George Washington.* By EDWARD EVERETT. New York : Sheldon & Co. Boston : Gould and Lincoln. 1860.

THIS *Life of Washington* was originally prepared by Mr. Everett for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. The limits of a biography to be inserted in such a work precluded a detailed narrative. But Mr. Everett, in drawing it up, has shown consummate skill in selecting the most important events in the successive and strongly-marked periods of Washington's life, and in condensing the intervening history into sentences and paragraphs, which so connect them, that the reader feels no break in the interest or continuity of the story. He has drawn the character of the great chieftain, not only under the inspiration of the hearty sympathy with its noble and heroic traits which no man has ever more thoroughly felt than he, but with a profound appreciation of its minutest characteristics, which nothing but long study and careful reflection can give.

In no one of Mr. Everett's works have we so thoroughly enjoyed the inimitable beauties of his style. Of course, in his great orations, there is, or there should be, a more brilliant display of consummate rhetoric. In this work, his exuberance of beautiful and classical language is toned down to the sobriety of the subject; yet scarcely a sentence occurs which does not rouse the imagination or steal into the heart, by some gracious touch of feeling, or some unstudied felicity of expression, that perpetually enchains the reader's attention. One might fancy that the story of Washington was as familiar as a twice-told tale, and that the character of Washington needed no further exposition. And this, to a certain extent, is doubtless the case. Most of the facts and incidents in his great career are well enough known to all outward seeming; but not well enough known in their coherent significance. For instance, the story of the New Jersey campaigns is tolerably familiar; but the fact that Washington showed in them a strategical skill which places him on a level with the genius of the greatest commanders of ancient and modern times, is not generally appreciated. Yet any intelligent man who surveys the scene of those immortal achievements, under guidance of Mr. Haven of Trenton, who knows the whole topography of that region by heart, must be convinced that the hero of the American Revolution was at least the equal of Cæsar and Napoleon in martial prowess and the genius of command.

A popular writer, Mr. Thackeray, in "*The Virginians*," has ventured to introduce Washington, in his youth, as a personage of fiction. The thought was rash and infelicitous, had the author succeeded in his daring attempt; but *magnis excidit ausis*,—and never was failure more

complete. Mr. Thackeray takes the satirical, the merely worldly view of life and society; he can take no other. His characters are compounded of many vices and few if any virtues; or, if the virtues predominate, the result is a *fool*. He has never drawn a true and dignified woman, nor a gentleman of the highest type. He has no conception of that simplicity in which nobleness of nature most largely consists. A grand character like that of Washington, endowed by a special Providence to achieve great changes in the course of human affairs; made up of the elemental virtues in the largest proportions; wise, but not crafty; reserved, yet simple and direct; forcible in action, but wasting no force on visionary or impracticable suggestions; 'grave, yet cheerful; disinterested and generous, but not prodigal; friendly and devoted, but never "hale fellow well met"; self-consistent from his earliest years to the day of his death; winning the fervent love of all around him, but never, from his wonderful boyhood, through his heroic youth, to his illustrious age, the object of trifling or hilarious familiarity, — such a character as this, the sarcastic delineator of vices and follies, the unweaver of social hypocrisies, the keen observer of superficial manners, the detector of hidden motives under plausible outsides, could never comprehend, and of course could never paint, however hard he may strive. The Colonel Washington of "The Virginians" is as unlike the real Washington, who joined the military family of Braddock, as Braddock himself was unlike the general that Washington became. Besides the absurd anachronism, by which he represents Washington as announcing to his mother his engagement to Mrs. Custis three years before the death of Mr. Custis, he commits the infinitely greater blunder of making him accept a challenge from a foolish, hot-headed youth, who fancies that the young officer is paying attention to his "lady mother"; — first, as if any family then living in Virginia would not have been honored, and felt itself honored, by an alliance with Washington, who was, even at that early age, universally recognized as the most distinguished person in the State; and, secondly, as if Washington could, at any time of his life, and under any circumstances, have been drawn into a duel. This moral blunder is worse than all the rest. It shows that Thackeray had not the key to the inner chambers of Washington's mind. And yet we have heard some Americans praise this foolish picture, because, forsooth, it makes Washington like other men. Why, this is the very essence of the falsehood. Washington was not like other men; and to bring his lofty character down to the level of the vulgar passions of common life, is to give the lie to the grandest chapter in the uninspired annals of the human race.

It is needless to say, that Mr. Everett's conception of Washington,

as embodied in his famous oration, and more completely expressed in this biography, fully recognizes the providential element in his illustrious career. He looks upon the being he endeavors to portray with a reverence which no ordinary man, however conspicuous in the records of fame, could inspire, and which no other mortal ever deserved, — but which Washington ought to inspire in right-minded and intelligent men, and which he, and he alone, most assuredly deserves. The summing up of Washington's character at the end of the volume is a masterly specimen of historical portraiture, which we should be glad to quote did our limits permit; but it is not necessary, for all who read anything will certainly read this little book, and they will find in it the realities of history presented after the most conscientious study, and an interest more absorbing than romance, because it arises from truth, clothed with the charms of the highest literary skill.

We cannot close this brief notice without calling attention to the graceful and pathetic tribute to Lord Macaulay, at whose suggestion Mr. Everett undertook the work; and to the paper, by the venerable Dr. Jackson, on the disease of which Washington died. This document presents in so clear and simple a form the facts and the science of the case, that the unprofessional reader fully understands them; and we share in the satisfaction of Mr. Everett, that he has been able to lay before the public so admirable a paper, written at his request by the venerable head of his profession in Boston.

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27. — *The Vocabulary of Philosophy, Mental, Moral, and Metaphysical; with Quotations and References, for the Use of Students.* By WILLIAM FLEMING, D. D., Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow. From the Second, Revised and Enlarged, London Edition. *With an Introduction, Chronology of the History of Philosophy brought down to 1860, Bibliographical Index, Synthetical Tables, and other Additions,* by CHARLES P. KRAUTH, D. D., Translator of "Tholuck on the Gospel of John." Philadelphia: Smith, English, & Co. 1860. Small 8vo. pp. 662.

THIS is indeed an age of dictionaries, and there is scarce any department of knowledge which has not been reduced to an alphabetical series of titles, and treated in an encyclopedic form. We are not certain that we have ever seen a work like this; and we had hardly supposed that what might be deemed the peculiar and technical terms of philosophy were numerous enough to give scope for an extensive vocabulary. But this dictionary has between seven and eight hundred